

Wild Plants recipes

In the final episode of this series of Grow Your Own Drugs: discover how to make a compress to soothe tired eyes, using dried eyebright and tea leaves; a nettle and chamomile tea to help with the symptoms of hayfever; eucalyptus and elderberry jelly for colds; and an invigorating body scrub that includes seaweed and sand.

Eyebright Compress

2 tsp dried eyebright tsp ordinary black tea leaves unfilled tea bags Small amount of hot water

Mix the dried eyebright and tea leaves in a small bowl, then spoon into 2 empty tea bags. Seal or fold over the bags. Place the bags in a shot glass of hot but not boiling water. Leave for 10 minutes, then squeeze out and place one over each eye.

USE: Relax with the eye compresses on for 10-15 minutes.

STORAGE: Make fresh as you need it.

Nettle & Chamomile Tea for Hay Fever

2-3 tbsp fresh nettles, or 1-2 tbsp dried tsp fresh German chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*) or 2 tsp dried tsp locally produced honey, to taste

1. Wash the fresh nettles well, then chop roughly with a large knife. Put the nettles, stalks and all, and chamomile into a glass teapot. Pour boiling water over and leave to steep for 5 minutes - this will also take the sting out of the nettles.
2. Strain into a tea cup and serve, adding 1 teaspoon of local honey, or to taste. This makes a pot equivalent to 3 cups.

USE: Drink 3 cups a day while suffering from hay fever, for as long as you need it.

STORAGE: Make fresh as you need it.

Eucalyptus & Elderberry Jelly

400g elderberries Bramley apple ml water Juice of 1 lime A few fresh eucalyptus leaves Whole dried chilli g granulated sugar

1. Wash the elderberries and apple. Chop the apple without peeling or coring. Put the elderberries, apple (including the core), water, lime juice, eucalyptus leaves and chilli into a pan and simmer for 15 minutes. Strain through a sieve, pressing with the back of spoon to extract as much of the pulp as possible.
2. Place the elderberry liquid in a large pan and add the sugar. Bring to the boil, stirring occasionally to stop the sugar from burning, then simmer for another 30 minutes. If you have a jam thermometer to hand, the jelly reaches setting point at 105°C / 221°F.
3. When it's ready, skim off any scum, then bottle in sterilized jam jars, putting a waxed disc, wax-

side down, on top. Cover with a round of cellophane and secure with a rubber band or ribbon.

USE: Take 1 generous tablespoon whenever you feel cold symptoms coming on.

STORAGE: Will keep for up to 1 year in a cool dark place. Once opened, store in the refrigerator.

Seaweed & Sand Body Scrub

25g dried kelp g dried carrageen .5 litres water large tbsp sea salt tbsp fine, dry beach sand (not builder's sand!) drops rosemary essential oil

1. Soak the kelp and carrageen overnight in the water.
2. Next day, roughly cut the kelp with scissors into small pieces. Place the kelp, carrageen and water mixture in a pan, bring to the boil and simmer for approximately 30 minutes.
3. Place in a blender and whizz. Return the pulp to the pan and heat for 10 minutes more. Stir in the salt, sand and essential oil. Bottle in a glass jar.

USE: Gently rub a handful of the scrub over skin in the shower, using circular movements and paying particular attention to rough skin on the knees, feet and elbows. Rinse off well.

CAUTION: Do not use on the face. This is quite an abrasive exfoliator, so use no more than once a week.

STORAGE: Will keep for 6 months in the refrigerator.